

July protester succumbs to gunshot injuries

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Md Ashiqur Rahman Hridoy, 17, who suffered critical gunshot wounds in his head during the 2024 uprising in Dhaka's Jatrabari area, has died while undergoing treatment in Patuakhali.

Abdur Rauf, the upazila health and family planning officer, said Hridoy was brought to Bauphal Upazila Health Complex around noon on Friday.

"He was in a critical condition. We advised his family to take him to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal immediately, but they couldn't arrange the transfer in time. He died here around 4:00pm," Rauf said.

Hridoy was laid to rest at the family graveyard yesterday morning after a namaj-e-janaza.

The young protester, son of rickshaw-puller Ansar Hawlader of Paschim Jauta village in Bauphal upazila, had been suffering from post-injury complications for months.

According to family members, Hridoy used to work as a labourer



Hridoy

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First step towards easing tensions

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India has drastically cut down on visas for Bangladeshis.

The Indian government too expressed concerns over alleged minority repression.

In December last year, Dhaka sought extradition for Hasina, who faces charges of mass killings in Bangladesh during the July uprising.

At Friday's meeting, Yunus did not hesitate to seek an update on Hasina's extradition request, detailing the crimes committed during the July uprising and referring to the UN Fact-Finding Mission's report.

Prof Sreeradha Datta, also a non-resident senior fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore, said the extradition process is a complicated one.

Bangladesh will have to initiate legal procedures for a formal request of extradition and India's judicial system will examine the matter closely. Extradition request is a complex issue and any such move will not be easy.

India will not extradite Hasina unless there is serious international pressure, said a diplomatic source.

Yunus raised the issue of Hasina's inflammatory statements at the meeting, but Modi blamed social media for the tensions around her remarks.

Modi also urged that "the rhetoric that vitiates the environment" is avoided.

India has not taken positively the recent remarks by Yunus on northeast India during his visit to China, Datta said.

"I think both sides need to maintain logic and speak based on facts when those involve bilateral relations," she said.

Modi's statement that India believes in people centric relationships and does not support any particular political party or individual is extremely important, Biswas said.

"To take the relations forward, I would suggest that India ease the visa regime for Bangladeshis at the soonest. This will greatly help normalise the relations."

Yunus rightly invited Indian media to visit Bangladesh and report the facts on minority issues.

"This can help remove any wrong perceptions," he added.

Some of the issues that irritate Bangladesh including the long-pending Teesta water sharing deal, the renewal of the Ganges water treaty and border killing were raised by Yunus in the meeting.

"The frank conversation at all levels between the two countries needs to continue to address the issues," Datta said.

Bangladesh deeply values its relationship with India, Yunus told Modi, describing the historical links and acknowledging India's role in Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971.

Modi reiterated India's support for a "democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh" and highlighted that cooperation between the two countries has brought tangible benefits to the people of both countries and underlined India's desire to forge a positive and constructive relationship with Bangladesh based on pragmatism.

"These positive comments from both sides are a friendly gesture, but the relationship is likely to normalise once there is a democratically elected government in power in Bangladesh," Datta added.



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at an emergency meeting with advisers, the central bank governor and senior officials at the state guesthouse Jamuna yesterday evening to discuss Bangladesh's response to new tariffs announced by the US.

PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

Bangladesh moves to deal with US tariff shock

FROM PAGE 1

with stakeholders across government and industry, including the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry. He is scheduled to meet today with US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Tracey Ann Jacobson, where he will formally express Bangladesh's concern over the tariff decision and share the outlines of the government's position.

After the meeting convened by Yunus yesterday, Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin said at a press briefing that the government will reduce the trade gap with the US by increasing the import of American goods, including cotton, soybean oil, petroleum products and industrial machinery. Trade barriers will also be removed to increase imports from America, he added.

"Our current understanding is that we will not be harmed," he said. "Because if you look at the competitor countries like Vietnam, China, Cambodia, you'll see that they mainly produce the same kind of goods."

"In the apparel sector, we are more diversified than India and Pakistan, even though they have lower tariffs than ours. And the structure or spectrum of our industry is more mature than theirs."

"We believe this may actually open up new doors of opportunity. We had started engaging with them even earlier," the commerce adviser said, adding that High Representative Khalilur visited the US in February on Yunus's instructions.

"Cotton imported from the US required fumigation twice. We amended our import policy through the commerce ministry, requiring fumigation only once. This removed a trade barrier and will boost trade," Bashir Uddin said. "Possibly, we were the first to raise the issue when Khalil went to the US. The US side itself said that we were the first to come forward. That shows our seriousness. We understood the issue earlier than others," he added.

Khalilur said he raised the issue at the US State Department first. "They were very enthusiastic. They themselves arranged meetings with the US Trade Representative, the Agriculture Department, and others."

"That's why I say that there's nothing to fear. We are in very good hands. We are currently in close discussions with them. These talks will continue over the next couple of days. We will send our official

response after intensive consultation with the US authorities," Khalilur said, adding that he had talked to the US Deputy National Security Advisor at the White House during a conversation just a few days ago.

"So they are aware. This is not some kind of bolt from the blue. The chief adviser had foreseen this when the Trump administration came in. And he responded in time," he said.

"We are the first country to take a unilateral initiative, and they [US] have recognised this. Therefore, we expect that when we formally request a review, we will receive a positive response," the high representative said.

US President Donald Trump on April 2 announced the 37 percent tariff on imports from Bangladesh, effective from April 9.

Now the Bangladesh government is seeking to open formal negotiations with the USTR to secure relief from the newly imposed tariffs and address the trade imbalance between the two countries. Bangladesh has assigned its mission in Washington to help arrange a meeting with the USTR, while also observing how other countries impacted by similar measures are preparing to respond.

The commerce ministry, in coordination with the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission, the National Board of Revenue (NBR), Md Touhid Hossain, foreign adviser; Ahsan H Mansur, Bangladesh Bank governor; and Khaifuzzaman Mozumder, finance secretary, attended the meeting.

Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, advised to the power, energy and mineral resources ministry, road transport and bridges ministry, and railways ministry; Zaidi Sattar, a trade expert; and Shafiqul Alam, press secretary to the chief adviser, were also present.

Ashik had earlier held a consultation meeting with a group of businessmen in Dhaka. They included Tapan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Pharmaceuticals; Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear Limited; Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, chairman and chief executive director of PRAN RFL Group; Mostafa Abid Khan, former member of Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission; and Zaidi Sattar.

After the meeting with Yunus, Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), said that of the \$8 billion in annual exports from Bangladesh to the US, \$7 billion originates from the garment industry, half a billion from leather, and the remainder from plastics and other sectors.

He said he held meetings with the stakeholders of all these sectors from morning to evening yesterday. "We've listened to their concerns and their suggestions. As you can imagine, different people offer different suggestions. We're trying to bring all the feedback together to reach a constructive, collective

shape of the plan."

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